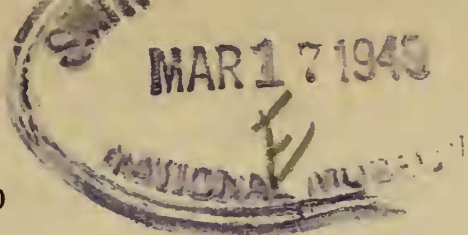


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PROCEEDINGS OF THE BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW RACE OF THE SOUTHERN INDIAN GREEN PIGEON

By S. DILLON RIPLEY

Through the kindness of Mr. W. W. A. Phillips, the authority on Ceylon birds and mammals, I have had an opportunity of examining specimens of the Southern Indian Green Pigeon recently secured by him in Ceylon. Mr. Phillips first came on this species in January, 1947 in the forests of Uva Province near Bibile, southeast Ceylon. His note on the occurrence was published in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society (47, No. 1, 1947, p. 162.). His record of these pigeons, which have been considered to be rare vagrants, is the first since that of Legge over 60 years ago. Later, specimens have been secured in September, November and February, some in breeding condition. Comparison of these birds with a series from South India reveals at once the presence of a new form which I propose as follows;

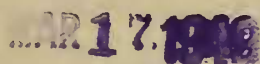
Treron phoenicoptera phillipsi subsp. nov.

Type.—♂ ad. (coll. S. Dillon Ripley No. 1801. Type on deposit in the Peabody Museum of Nat. Hist.), collected February 26, 1948, by W. W. A. Phillips at Nilgala near Bibile, Uva Province, S. E. Ceylon.

Diagnosis.—from chlorigaster of southern India this race differs by being smaller and by being duller yellow on the nape, more greenish, and duller, more grayish-green on the back and wings: below these birds lack the lemon yellow neck and breast. The yellow is confined to a sub-mental spot and to a patch about the vent and thighs. The breast and abdomen are dull greenish-yellow, more infused with grayish-green than in chlorigaster. The vinous shoulder patch also is duller and slightly darker than in chlorigaster. The measurements follow;

Table with 4 columns: species, sex, wing, tail, culmen. Rows for phillipsi (♂ and ♀) and chlorigaster (♂ and ♀).

Range.—Ceylon, so far found only in Uva Province in the southeast of the Island.



Remarks.—It gives me great pleasure to name this form for my friend who has helped me so much in connection with my studies of Ceylon birds. Mr. Phillips has recently sent me the following notes;

1) color of soft parts; "iris (both sexes), inner ring blue, outer carmine; eyelids bluish gray; bill pale bluish white; legs chrome yellow."

2) notes on occurrence; "In general this Pigeon appears to behave in similar manner to other Green Pigeons. It keeps chiefly to the tops of trees, and normally does not descend to the ground. During the winter period it collects in flocks and feeds on any berries and figs that may happen to be ripe. As they fly these Pigeons may be distinguished by the noise of their wings. A male shot Sept. 23rd was with two or three others and a number of Pompadour Green Pigeons feeding in a *Ficus*. I now think that this Pigeon must be resident in the Bibile jungles as, had the one shot this day been a migrant, it would most probably have been with a flock—also Northeast Monsoon migrants are only just beginning to come in. The gonads of the present bird were fairly well developed. Other specimens collected in late February also had the gonads enlarged. In addition to figs these birds were found feeding on the berries of *Vitex altissima*, called locally "milla." This bird probably breeds during March and April."

I am much indebted to Mr. J. D. Macdonald of the British Museum for measurements of a number of specimens of this form in the BM collection.